

**Annotation on ‘First Steps in Teaching Creative Dance to Children’  
by Mary Joyce**

*Chapter Four: The Lessons*

“Every teacher is different, just as every child is different.”

-Mary Joyce, p. 74

In this chapter, Joyce provides a starting point for teachers to use in planning their own creative movement classes. She realizes that each group of children is unique and encourages readers to adjust the lessons as they see fit.

Joyce’s lessons build on one another and provide students with opportunities to explore the elements in a variety of ways. As evidenced by the photos of the active and smiling children engaging in the movement activities, these lessons look to be effective and fun. The students are all participating and moving their bodies in creative and innovative ways. She encourages repetition of lesson content when appropriate, as she believes this helps the children develop a “sense of security and accomplishment” (p.76). I saw an example of this in my own grade 3 practicum class last year. I had taught my students ‘The Hamster Dance’ over a period of two classes and intended on moving on to something else. The students however asked to do the dance every time we went to the gym for the rest of my practicum. They felt confident and proud of their ability to do the dance well. It is important to note that Joyce also pointed out the value of dropping any lessons that do not go over well with a class.

I thought the chapter was well organized and very accessible. In the introduction, Joyce describes the process of choosing elements and helpers and also provides a list of all the ones used in her lessons. The layout of each lesson was also effective. The heading of each new lesson was followed by the element being taught, the helper being used and the appropriate grade level. The lessons were then written out in ‘teacher talk’ and full of questions and positive feedback for the children. For the conclusion of each lesson, Joyce included a section called ‘Goals for evaluation’ in which she describes what teachers should be focusing on in their observations of the students.

Overall, I would highly recommend this chapter to anyone interested in teaching creative movement.

Joyce, M. (1994). The lessons. In *First steps in teaching creative dance to children* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed., pp. 74-155). London: Mayfield.